

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 14103 020910Z
ACTION IO-14

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FODAG

FOR PAUL BYRNES, IO/AGR

PASS AID FOR SALES

PASS AGRICULTURE FOR KRIESBERG

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: FAO, AORG, WFC
SUBJECT: GENEVA GROUP ROME LUNCHEON WITH FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL, JULY
26

1. AT INVITATION OF PECKHAM, UK PERMREP, FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL
SAOUMA MET WITH CERTAIN GENEVA GROUP (GG) COUNTRIES FOR INFORMAL
LUNCH JULY 26. OTHER PARTICIPANTS WERE PHILLIPS, FAO ASSISTANT
DG; KENEALLY, AUSTRALLIA; WIGHTMAN, CANADA; LIEBER, FRDG; BAEYENS,
BELGIUM; BATAULT, FRANCE; DE BAKKER, NETHERLANDS; AND CRUIT, FODAG.

2. CONCERNING ATMOSPHERE, SAOUMA MADE OBVIOUS EFFORT TO BE
FRIENDLY, COOPERATIVE, AND UNDERSTANDING. HE SEEMED TO HAVE NEW
AIR OF CONFIDENCE AND GENUINE DESIRE TO WORK WITH GG COUNTRIES.
HE AGREED TO HOLDING MORE INFORMAL MEETINGS PERIODICALLY IN FUTURE.

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PAGE 02 ROME 14103 020910Z

3. REGARDING FAO BUDGET FOR NEXT BIENNIAL, SAOUMA INDICATED ON
VERY EARLY AND TENTATIVE BASIS THAT HE EXPECTED INCREASE OF
APPROXIMATELY 7-7.5 PERCENT OVER CURRENT BUDGET. HE
STRESSED THAT THIS NOT LARGE INCREASE CONSIDERING
RECENT PREVIOUS INCREASES IN FAO BUDGET. ALSO, HE STRESSED
NEED FOR RECOGNITION OF FAO'S SPECIAL POSITION AS CENTRAL
AGENCY IN MEETING WORLD'S FOOD PROBLEMS. GG COUNTRIES, FOR

THEIR PART, STRESSED PROBLEMS EXISTING IN OWN COUNTRIES.
U.S. POINTED TO PRESSURES ON ITS GOVERNMENT BOTH INTERNATIONALLY
AND DOMESTICALLY TO CURB GOVERNMENT SPENDING.

4. SAOUMA LAID HEAVY EMPHASIS ON FACT THAT HE AND DR. PHILLIPS
WERE REVIEWING EACH UNIT IN FAO TO SEE WHERE SAVINGS
COULD BE EFFECTED.

5. SAOUMA MADE POINT THAT, IN HIS OPINION, A "CONTACT GROUP"
APPROACH COULD FACILITATE REACHING CONSENSUS ON BUDGET AND,
HAD SUCH AN APPROACH BEEN TAKEN AT LAST CONFERENCE, ABSTENTIONS
AND QUALIFICATIONS OF APPROVALS WOULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED.

6. ON WORLD FOOD COUNCIL (WFC), SAOUMA EXPRESSED HIMSELF MOST
CLEARLY: QTE IT IS TOTALLY UNNECESSARY AND ONLY DUPLICATES
WHAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE EFFECTIVELY BY FAO. END QTE. THOUGH
NOT TAKING SAOUMA ON DIRECTLY ON THIS POINT, THE GG MEMBERS
STRESSED NEED FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN FAO AND WFC. THEY NOTED
THAT, INDEED, WFC COULD HELP FAO BY HIGHLIGHTING IMPORTANT
ISSUES. SAOUMA DID NOT CHALLENGE THIS POSITION EVEN IF HE DID
NOT ACCEPT IT.

7. CONCERNING NEW WFC EXECUTIVE DIRECOTR, SAOUMA EXPRESSED
HIGH REGARD FOR HIM AND HOPE FOR CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WHICH,
HE SAYS, HAS NOT EXISTED WITH HANNAH.

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PAGE 03 ROME 14103 020910Z

8. COMMENT: GG MEMBERS PRESENT AT LUNCH WERE IMPRESSED
WITH SAOUMA'S NEW APPROACH TO DEALING WITH GROUP. INDEED,
HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET PERIODICALLY IS STEP FORWARD. IN
FACT, HE MAY HAVE REALIZED HIS OLD APPROACH MAY NOT HAVE GAINED
HIM VERY MUCH AND, LOOKING TOWARD HIS RE-ELECTION, DECIDED TO
USE A LITTLE HONEY INSTEAD OF ALL THAT VINEGAR TO REACH
HIS OBJECTIVES.HOLMES

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